WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 MARCH 1984

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

ARGUS CAMERA, SPECIAL SPADE, TEA CUPS, POT, DRESSES, CITY DIRECTORIES GIVEN TO WCHS

Several gifts have been presented to the Society this year and been displayed at meetings or elsewhere but not yet mentioned here. Many thanks, donors.

A circa 1940 Argus camera and flash in original box was presented by Cal Foster, retired long-time employe, who previously gave us a collection of printed materials about the company.

A ceremonial spade used November 3, 1962 by Keeve Siegel at groundbreaking for Conductron Corporation, one of Ann Arbor's first high technology firms, was presented by James Parker in memory of a friend, Owen Sutherland, a partner of Siegels. The firm moved away about 1970 but the building still stands on Plymouth Road.

A set of six white tea cups and saucers, with a border of pink flowers and gold and a silver-glazed tea pot which belonged to long-time Ann Arbor resident Grace Rash were given by her nephew, John Allison.

A circa 1880 gray taffeta wedding gown which belonged to the great-aunt of the late Adelaide Rueger, a local teacher, was given by the Thrift Shop, courtesy of Mrs. Robert Goldsmith and Mrs. George Hall.

An unusual open-work braid dress of the early 1900's, displayed at "A Century of Fashion" last fall, was given by Janet Wolfe White, a former neighbor of WCHS Treasurer Elizabeth Dusseau.

Ronald D. Dosher of the Ann Arbor Credit Bureau gave us a collection of old city directories which have been placed on loan to the resource center at Kempf House where the public may use them.

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Chelsea Historical Society: 7:30 p.m. second Monday, McKune Memorial Library, 221 South Main. Chelsea will be celebrating its 150th anniversary this summer.

Dexter Historical Society: Eleventh annual craft fair with about 60 demonstrators, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, March 17, in Dexter High School gym. Luncheon, bake sale by Heritage Guild. New demonstrators include makers of Nantucket baskets, violins, wood inlay, porcelain dolls and a Victorian hair weaver. Admission, $1, adult; children K-12, 50¢.

Manchester Historical Society: 8 p.m. third Monday, Schneider Blacksmith Shop museum. March 19, Manchester history 1920-1960.

Milan Historical Society: 7:30 p.m. third Wednesday, Hack House, 775 County Street.

Northfield Historical Society: Tom Hennings, Eastern Michigan University English professor, and his committee are busily preparing an illustrated history of the township they hope to have ready this summer.

Webster Historical Society: Meet first Monday, time and place to be announced. Call 426-4839.

Ypsilanti Historical Society: Museum, 220 North Huron, open 2-4 p.m. Friday-Sunday. Special small exhibit of Tiffany vases and Tiffany-type window and lamps by local craftsman, a Mr. McCollum.

SECOND EXHIBIT DEBUTS

A second traveling exhibit of "what's it?" items from the WCHS collections has been put together by Brad Taylor and President Patricia Austin. It is now being tried out at Ann Arbor's Angell School and will be available to other schools. For information call Mrs. Austin at 663-5281.

AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIAN WILL SPEAK IN APRIL

A noted Michigan historian, George S. May, author and editor of several volumes on Michigan and automotive history, will speak at the Sunday, April 8, WCHS meeting on the development of the auto industry.

YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS CAN MAKE HISTORY, BRING THEM TO MARCH MEETING

You can give some of your photographs of Washtenaw County people, places and events a place in history by bringing them to be copied at the Sunday, March 11, WCHS meeting at 2:30 p.m. at the American Legion.

Sam Breck of Ann Arbor will copy and return the photos then and there, free of charge. Copy negatives will be placed on file at Bentley Library on the U-M North Campus. There they will be part of the Michigan Historical Collections available to researchers.

Each person may bring up to ten unframed black-and-white or color photographs no larger than 11 by 14 inches. IMPORTANT: Each picture must be accompanied by a 3 by 5 inch card, typed or clearly written, listing names (left to right), place, date, occasion and significance — in other words give as much information as you can about it.

He cannot copy slides or "silk-finish" prints. He will make introductory remarks about the value and care of photos for historical purposes, also how to copy and store them.

DUFF GIFT WILL HELP WITH LOCAL HISTORY

Last fall it was announced the Society Board voted to give a $100 memorial gift to Bentley Library in honor of the late Lela Duff, author of *Ann Arbor Yesterdays,* to microfilm the *Washtenaw Tribune.*

Since the Tribune has already been microfilmed the Board will authorize the library to use the gift "for some project involving preservation of materials documenting the history of the county."

BRAUN APPOINTED

WCHS member David C. Braun has been appointed to fill out the term of Bradley Taylor, on the Board of Directors. The term expires in June.

AMERICAN COOKBOOK HISTORY

Jan Longone Brings It to World's Attention

Jan and Dan Longone's recent exhibition of American cooking and wine books at the U-M's Clements Library was the first ever such exhibition anywhere, Mrs. Longone said in introducing her talk at the February WCHS meeting.

There is growing interest in American food history, she said. She gets requests for information from all over the world, the last being from Ethiopia.

Their *Catalogue*, really a history, of American cook- and wine books, prepared for the exhibit, has been called a landmark study by James Beard, who was first to call and congratulate them.

He did an article about it, which, judging from her mail, appeared in about a hundred newspapers all over the country.

Mrs. Longone founded the Ann Arbor Wine and Food Library ten years ago. One of only three such in the world, it is both a library or collection and a bookshop in her home, conducted by mail or appointment only.

There was not a cookbook physically printed in the United States until 1742. A Williamsburg printer, William Park, published Eliza Smith's *The Complete Housewife or Accomplished Gentlewoman's Companion* that year, a British book first published in London in 1727.

"It was not until 1796, after the Revolution, that a cookbook was printed in America, written by an American.

One of the most interesting and scarce English cookbooks published in this country, *The Frugal Housewife,* by Susanna Carter, printed in Boston in 1772, had copper plates by Paul Revere.

The first American cookbook was entitled *American Cookery or the Art of Dressing Viands, Fish, Poultry, Vegetables and the Best Modes of Making Pastes, Puffs, Pies, Tarts, Puddings, Custards and Preserves and All Kinds of Cakes from the Imperial Plum to Plain Cake Adapted to This Country and All Classes of Life.*

"Many times the title was bigger than the book in those days. There are five known copies in existence," she said, "one in Clements."

"No onw knows who the author, Amelia Simmons, was except she tells us she was an American orphan and people pick on her because she's an orphan."

NOTORIOUS SWEET TOOTH

> From time immemorial people have commented that Americans have a sweet tooth that nobody else has. One of my favorite quotes about this is by an Englishman named Charles Latrobe, later governor-general of Australia, who visited America in the 1830's.
>
> He wrote, "No where is the stomach of the traveler or visitor put in such constant peril as among the cake-inventive housewives and daughters of New England. Such is the universal attention paid to this particular branch of epicurism in these states that I greatly suspect that some of the Pilgrim fathers must have come over to this country with a cookery book under one arm and the Bible under the other." *Jan Longone*

Mrs. Longone read Miss Simmon's disclaimer, a favorite quotation:

"The Author of *American Cookery,* not having an education sufficient to prepare the work for the press, the person that was employed by her and entrusted with the receipts to prepare them for publication, with a design to impose on her and injure the sale of this book, did omit several articles, very essential in some of the receipts, and placed others in their stead which were highly injurious to them, without her consent."

"It was the first time in history any recipes were printed using cornmeal. Corn is indigenous to the new world. This book contains five recipes using cornmeal — three for Indian pudding, one for johnny or hoe cake and one for Indian slapjacks.

"She also mentions cranberry sauce and turkey, both indigenous to the new world, and using watermelon to make American citron because she couldn't get citron."

Most importantly she mentioned use of a chemical substance which became baking powder — pearlash, a staple in households taken from the from the fire ash, as a chemical leavening. All quick cakes come from this.

The next important American cookbook was Mary Randolph's *The Virginia Housewife,* 1824. It's the first regional American cookery book. One of the few first edition copies in existence is at Clements.

It mentions catfish, okra, gumbo and barbecued shoat (a fat young hog).

The first cookbook written by a Black appeared in 1827 but it's not a very "Black" cookbook. The author, Robert Roberts, was the maitre 'd' in the household of Governor and Senator Gore of Massachusetts. The book, *The House Servant's Directory,* is believed to have been used by leading caterers and household managers.

By about 1830 you begin to get famous woman writers and several popular themes emerged — economy and frugality, household management or domestic economy, preoccupation with baking and desserts, and perhaps surprisingly, vegetarianism, diet and health, she said.

Not many books were published during the Civil War but afterward three astonishing things happened. Charity cookbooks, starting as fund raisers for veterans or anyone damaged by the war, swept the country.

"One of the reasons for this talk and the exhibit has to do with the fact that I was asked to give a lecture at Oxford University on the history of American cookbooks in a seminar about world cookbooks.

"There were people there from every corner of the world. People spoke on the most esoteric subjects — Arab trade patents of the fourth century, Indonesian highland cooking. Everybody there understood all that.

"I got up and read the title of this book, a regional American cookbook published in Cleveland in 1842, Philomelia Pardon's *Everybody's Cook and Receipt Book, More Particularly Designed for Buckeyes, Hoosiers, Wolverines, Corn Crackers, Suckers and All Epicures Who Wish to Live at the Present Time."* Mrs. Longone also mentioned spiders and johnny cake.

"My husband was in the audience and the whole time, everybody was going 'What is she talking

about?' " He said her talk was the most foreign of all.

"The Kentucky Housewife, 1839, I think is one of America's finest cookbooks. There is a book called Miss Pound's *Carolina Cookbook,* and the first cookbook published in the "west," *Table Receipts Adapted to Western Housewifery,* New Albany, Indiana.

Before 1914 there is a record of 3,000 charity cookbooks that were published in the U.S. I, myself, have held in my hand another 3,000 such books never reported. If I could only speak at every historical society in the country we could probably make it five or six times as many.

"If you have any charity cookbooks, while you may not want to part with them, please call me and let me record the names for posterity."

The second thing is that with industrialization, companies introducing baking powder, stoves and other new equipment began to publish pamphlets. In 1900 the Jello company published 15 million pamphlets.

The third post-Civil War development was cooking schools formed all over — Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati.

"Also we have a lot of national magazines and the wonderful 1893 World's Fair. *Godey's Lady's Book,* founded in 1830, was most influential. There was *Harper's Bazaar,* 1866, and *Woman's Home Companion,* 1873. These had many references to cooking.

The 1893 World's Fair had a woman's building for the first time in history. It was entirely designed and decorated by women. The first electric kitchen and first gas kitchen in history were displayed.

A beautiful art nouveau cookbook was put out by the lady managers at the fair. The book was offered in cheap, middle price and deluxe editions with proceeds helping women attend who couldn't have otherwise.

The depression and wars brought about their own literature, and of course, we mustn't forget the great waves of immigration. The first generation had cookbooks in their native tongue with recipes. A 19th century Danish cookbook had recipes for johnny cake, New England clam chowder and baked beans.

The next generation cookbooks would be in English with a mix of American and old country recipes and by the third generation they were trying to teach them about old country food.

Before 1920 the following nationalities had published cookbooks in America, either in their own language or English — Chinese, Japanese, Jewish, Bohemian, Austro-Hungarian, Polish, French, German, Central American, South American, Italian, Mexican, Spanish, Greek, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Finnish, Dutch and Belgian.

"The nineteenth century was dominated by the most remarkable group of women I have ever had the pleasure to read about. They wrote cookbooks, they were active in anti-slavery and temperance, suffrage, women's education, child welfare, farm problems, widows, orphans, sailor's wives, working conditions —just everything you can imagine.

Their books went through as many as 83 editions. Some of the writers were Lydia Maria Child, Sara Josepha Hale, Eliza Leslie and Catherine Beecher.

Mrs. Child (no relation to Julia) author of *The American Frugal Housewife,* was a very active anti-slavery personality and southerners quit buying her book. Wendell Phillips, the noted abolitionist, spoke at her funeral and wrote an appendix to a volume of her letters, published posthumously. John Greenleaf Whittier wrote the introduction.

"Mrs. Hale was editor of *Godey's* for 40 years. She wrote 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' — I always hate to tell people that because that's all they remember. She persuaded Abraham Lincoln in 1863 that Thanksgiving should be made a national holiday in the hope of it having a healing effect.

Eliza Leslie's books "are among the most elegant ever written. She wrote recipes for cornmeal that are absolutely spectacular — 200 recipes for cookies, cakes, waffles using cornmeal that you could use today.

What's American Cooking?

HERE'S MARK TWAIN'S IDEA

Mrs. Longone's answer to a frequent question, "Is there such a thing as American cooking?" is a quote from Mark Twain, who after touring Europe in 1878 wrote:

"It has now been many months at the present writing since I have had a nourishing meal, but I shall have one, a modest private affair, all to myself.

"I have selected a few dishes and made out a little bill of fare, which will go home in the steamer that precedes me and be hot when I arrive home, as follows:

"Radishes, baked apples with cream, fried oysters, stewed oysters, frogs, American butter, American coffee with real cream, fried chicken, southern-style, porterhouse steak, Saratoga potatoes (chips), chicken American-style, hot biscuits, southern-style, hot wheat bread southern-style, hot buckwheat cakes, American toast, clear maple syrup, Virginia bacon, bluepoints on the half-shell, cherrystone clams, San Francisco mussel soup, oyster soup, clam soup, Philadelphia terrapin soup, oysters roasted in the shell, northern-style soft-shell crab, Connecticut shad, Baltimore perch, brook trout from Sierra Nevada, lake trout from Tahoe, sheepshead and croakers from New Orleans, black bass from the Mississippi, American roast beef, roast turkey Thanksgiving-style, cranberry sauce, Boston bacon and beans, succotash (an American indigenous dish invented by Indians), potatoes roasted in ashes southern-style, peach cobbler, apple pie, apple fritters, all sorts of American pastry, pumpkin and squash pie (both indigenous) and fresh American fruits of all sorts, including strawberries which are not be doled out as if they were jewelry, and ice water, not prepared in the ineffectual goblet but in the sincere and capable refrigerator."

"We had a press reception at Clements. Among the foods I served was a butter cooky make with cornmeal taken by James Beard from Miss Leslie. It was a hit.

Catherine Beecher was of the family of the Reverend Lyman Beecher, the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher and a sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who wrote *Uncle*

Tom's Cabin. The sisters together wrote half a dozen cookbooks.

Juliet Corso founded the New York Cooking School. Then we had the famous Boston Cooking School where Mary Johnson Lincoln was the first principal, then Fannie Farmer.

Fannie Farmer's cookbook was probably the most printed in history. Since it appeared in 1896 it's gone through 12 editions, 70 printings and sold over 3 million copies.

A man who traveled in America in 1910 wrote in a French-language book, now translated:

"The second school I saw was a cooking school. A woman rented a few rooms in some house or other, had a luxurious brochure printed on Holland-type paper, and voila — a new school.

"The director, Miss Farmer, is a lady in her 40's, very lively, fair with gold-framed gleaming glasses on her nose, a pretty little lace cap on her head, a bodice of white pique and white apron.

"She explained her system which is very simple. Irish girls arrived from their homeland, knowing nothing, seeking a situation, for the sum of $3 or $4 Miss Farmer has them into the kitchen for two weeks and they come out cooks.

"She also teaches them to wait at tables, instructs them in clean teeth, neat nails, tidy hair and how to pick up table crumbs. But the school was founded to teach middle and upper class girls how to do their own cooking and run a house.

"They enroll in groups of eight which makes a class. They pay $1 or $1.50 a lesson. There are six courses consisting of 10 lessons each. I saw these girls putting on their caps and aprons as they arrive. They seemed to be having great fun playing housekeeper.

"They come here the moment they're engaged, Miss Farmer tells me, and you see they do the work themselves, prepare the lunch, take turns serving it and eat."

The wine section of the exhibit and book were done by Mrs. Longone's husband, Dan, a professor of chemistry at the University of Michigan.

While Mrs. Longone had to choose from thousands of books, he had no such trouble. Very few wine books were published in nineteenth century America. Almost all of them were in the display.

One book was written by a Swiss named Dupore, who as a child read accounts of French soldiers helping the brave Americans during the Revolution. They said everything was wonderful about America except the wine was terrible.

He decided to go to America and devote his life to making good wine there. He traveled to every corner of the US, visited Jefferson's vineyards, and went as far as the Mississippi river.

He settled in Kentucky and tried to grow European grapes there. That failed and he moved to Vevay, Indiana, named for a wine city in Switzerland, where they still grow grapes.

She then showed some original and facsimile examples of early books, including *Dr. Chase's Recipes or Information for Everyone,* Published in many editions in Ann Arbor and elsewhere.

"He was the most important author, maybe in all nineteenth century America. His building at Miller and Main in Ann Arbor still stands and he is buried in Forest Hill Cemetery.

"There was a big fight between those who wanted to grow European grapes and those who wanted to grow American.

CHELSEA PICKS HEPBURN

Max Hepburn is the new president of Chelsea Historical Society, and his wife, Marge, vice-president. Lynda Longe is secretary and Angela Smith, treasurer.

WEBSTER OFFICERS NAMED

Jim Parker was re-elected president of Webster Historical Society. Marjorie Smyth is vice-president, Dr. Karl Grube, secretary, and Mrs. Linda Oberto, treasurer. Trustees are Paul Kleinschmidt, May Mast and Vida McCray-Gardner. Gloria Brigham is program chairman; Kathy Vigue, ways and means; Linda Chapman, blacksmith shop; Mrs. Agnes Sullivan, membership; and Parker, history.

GSWC WILL HEAR BURTON LIBRARIAN

Joe Oldenburg of the Burton Historical Collections at the Detroit Public Library will speak at the Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County meeting at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, March 25 in Hale Auditorium in the U-M School of Business Administration, Tappan and Hill Streets, Ann Arbor, His topic is "Genealogy Through Documents."

GSWC will conduct workshops from 9:30 a.m.-noon Saturday, March 24, at Manchester High School, and 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, March 27, at the Chelsea Senior Citizens' Center.

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WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

2:30 P.M. SUNDAY March 11, 1984

AMERICAN LEGION 1035 South Main Ann Arbor, Michigan

Ypsilanti Historical Society
220 N. Huron St.
Ypsilanti, MI 48197